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TO RUEHVI/AMEMBASSY VIENNA IMMEDIATE 0214
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INFO RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
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RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SARAJEVO 000186

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EUR/SCE(HOH/FOOKS); NSC FOR BRAUN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/25/2017

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SUBJECT: BOSNIA - DODIK RECEIVES CLEAR U.S. WARNING ON
DESTABILIZING TALK

REF: SARAJEVO 41

Classified By: Ambassador Douglas McElhaney. Reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

11. (C) SUMMARY: The Ambassador met with Republika Srpska (RS) Premier Milorad Dodik January 25 and delivered a stern warning that the USG had lost patience with his destabilizing rhetoric, especially on Kosovo status. He told Dodik that if such rhetoric did not cease, the USG would be forced to support punitive measures currently under consideration by the Office of the High Representative (OHR). END SUMMARY.

12. (C) In the course of a two-day visit to Banja Luka, the Ambassador met RS Premier Milorad Dodik for over one hour. He noted the history of working relations between the USG and Dodik,s party, warning that the future of those relations had been placed at risk by Dodik,s campaign rhetoric on RS status referenda as well as by recent statements on a third (Croat) entity for Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) and implied linkages between Kosovo status and the RS. The Ambassador told Dodik that the USG policy community had grown irritated by such statements and had no patience for their repetition. The Kosovo status process and BiH,s sovereignty and territorial integrity are key policy priorities of the USG for the Balkan region. If Dodik jeopardized them by continued inflammatory public statements, the USG would support the punitive measures currently being considered by Bosnia,s High Representative Christian Schwarz-Schilling.

13. (C) In the presence of staff and note-takers, Dodik told the Ambassador that he had not intended to offend the USG, and that his statements that RS authorities would quell any demonstrations that resulted from a Kosovo independence decision were an attempt to make a positive contribution. The Ambassador responded that his messages thus far had suggested that he was inviting Bosnian Serbs to take issue with the Ahtisaari plan, and his appearances with Serbian Premier Vojislav Kostunica of late had put Dodik squarely in opposition to U.S. objectives in the region. After asking note takers and staff to leave the room, the Ambassador repeated his warning to Dodik to cease and desist. Dodik said that he had received and understood the message.

14. (C) Note: Separately, OHR staff told us late today that High Representative Schwarz-Schilling had been reconsidering his earlier plans to summon Dodik to Sarajevo and use his Bonn Powers to punish Republika Srpska for Dodik's repeated outbursts (reftel). The Ambassador has agreed to meet with Schwarz-Schilling and the German Ambassador Michael Schmunk

on Saturday, January 27 to brief the HighRep on his exchange
with Dodik.
MCELHANEY